



# Retained to Permanent Firefighter Pathway

## Recruitment Campaign - 2024

### Assessment Strategy



## Preamble

The 2023 Retained Award has codified a Retained to Permanent Pathway, with the requirement for a working party to report back with the details of this pathway.

### 40.5. Retained to Permanent (Full-time) Pathway

- 40.5.1. Any Retained Firefighter with 48 months (4 years) of service at the time of the opening of an intake round for Permanent Firefighters, will be entitled to be considered for a Permanent Firefighter position in a separate, Retained-only stream as part of the Department's general intake round, subject to the following provisions:
  - 40.5.1.1. Up to 25% of the number of positions in each general intake round are to be set aside for Retained Firefighters. This number may be changed at any time through agreement between the Parties.
  - 40.5.1.1.1. At the commencement of each general intake round, the Department must notify the workforce of the percentage of positions in that intake round that will be set aside for Retained Firefighters in line with Clause 40.5 of this Award.
  - 40.5.1.2. Eligible Retained Firefighters are to apply through the usual intake process and indicate that they are a current Retained Firefighter with Fire & Rescue NSW.
  - 40.5.1.3. All Retained Firefighters who apply will be set aside and compete internally for the up to 25% of positions set aside for Retained Firefighters.
  - 40.5.1.4. Selection to the position will be via a merit-based selection process which will be determined by the parties via consultation in accordance with Clause 8, Consultation, within 3 months of the commencement of this Award.
  - 40.5.1.5. If there are more Retained Firefighter candidates than positions, those who are unsuccessful will be placed into the general intake pool and will compete with the general public for the remaining Permanent Firefighter positions.
  - 40.5.1.6. If there are fewer successful Retained Firefighter candidates than positions, the surplus Retained positions will be transferred to the general intake and be available for those competing in that intake.
- As per Section 40.5.1.4 the working group has met a number times and determined via productive consultation between the FBEU and FRNSW the merit-based selection process and finalised its recommendations for the Joint Consultative Committee.
- The Retained to Permanent Pathway aims to improve attraction and retention to the Retained ranks. Retained firefighters are trained professional firefighters working in an on-call capacity from diverse backgrounds. The Pathway aims ensure that Retained firefighters feel valued as a contributor to the organisation, and in turn are highly motivated to continue their career with FRNSW.
- This document outlines the Assessment Strategy for the Retained to Permanent Firefighter Pathway Recruitment Campaign. This document provides guidance for the Retained to Permanent Firefighter Pathway advertising, selection, and onboarding process.



## Selection Criteria

### Essential Requirements (eligibility):

- Minimum 4 years cumulative service as a Retained Firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW within the 7 year period at the time of applications closing. Noting that LWOP and periods not employed by FRNSW do not count as cumulative service. Noting no detriment to Covid vaccine mandate leave.
- Valid NSW Driver's Licence – minimum Provision Licence (Green P2)
- Demerit Points:
  - No more than 7 demerit points accrued for full licence holders (6 remaining)
  - No more than 1 demerit point accrued for provisional licence holders (6 remaining)
- Medium Rigid (MR) licence, or willingness to obtain prior to commencement in a Recruit Class.

### Behavioural Capabilities

Focus capabilities (and required level) for the role of Retained Firefighter, as per the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework:

- **Act with Integrity (intermediate):** be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values
- **Communicate Effectively (intermediate):** communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect (written and verbal communication)
- **Commit to Customer Service (intermediate):** provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives (community engagement)
- **Demonstrate Accountability (intermediate):** be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines (self-motivated and rule-following)
- **Technology (foundational):** understand and use available technologies to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness

### Other role-specific abilities & attributes:

- Problem solving
- Team-work and collaboration
- Interpersonal / engagement skills
- Alignment with, and commitment to, FRNSW values
- Resilience
- Understanding of the role requirements and challenges
- Physical fitness / strength

All selection criteria will be assessed across a range of assessments, completed at various stages of the recruitment process. To be deemed successful, candidates will need to demonstrate they meet the required level at each assessment step:

1. Application (eligibility questions)
2. Video Interview (screening / shortlisting)
3. Physical Aptitude Test (PAT)
4. Assessment Centre (panel interview and group task)



## Video Interview

Candidates who meet all eligibility criteria in their initial application will be invited to complete a video interview. This involves answering a pre-recorded question, which focuses on verbal communication skills, understanding of and alignment to FRNSW values.

The Video Interview question is pre-recorded and presented to all candidates the same way (via an online platform); candidates may complete their response online, at a time of their choosing (within a provided date range).

A practice question will be provided which can be attempted multiple times until the candidate is feeling comfortable to progress with the assessed question.

Two (2) minutes preparation time will be provided before the recording of the response commences to allow time to process the question, reflect on the proposed answer and make some brief notes.

## Physical Aptitude Test (PAT)

Candidates who pass the Video Interview will be invited to participate in the Physical Aptitude Test (PAT) if they have not completed a Health & Safety PAT within the 13 months prior to their application.

Previous failure of the PAT does not prevent someone from redoing it in any timeframe.

Regional PATs may be adopted where 40 or more people are available to participate. If the volume can not be reached the Regional PAT will not go forward. In the absence of a Regional PAT, the PAT will be conducted within the GSA.

## Assessment Centre

Candidates who pass the Physical Aptitude Test will be invited to attend the Assessment Centre. The Assessment Centre is a series of activities designed to assess critical skills and behavioural capabilities required in the role. The Assessment Centre includes:

### *Panel Interview*

Candidates will meet with a two-person panel and will be asked to answer a series of behavioural based questions, relevant to the capacities of the role.

### *Group Task*

Candidates will be placed in groups and asked to discuss a shared fictional scenario with their fellow colleagues. This activity explores the ability to problem solve, work in a team environment, and communicate effectively with others.

## Pre-employment Checks

Candidates who successfully progress through all assessments will be placed into a pool for allocation into a Permanent Firefighter Recruit Class.



To ensure the information gathered through the pre-employment checks is current, these checks will be initiated when the candidate is being considered for placement in a specific Recruit Class (as per the standard PFF recruitment process).

Pre-employment checks will include:

### Reference Checks:

- Two (2) reference checks, one of which must be from a current FRNSW supervisor/manager who has directly observed and can comment on the candidate's work performance (i.e. Deputy Captain, Captain, Station Officer, Duty Commander or Zone Commander).
- Personal or character references are not accepted.
- An additional reference check from a third referee will be obtained to validate any concerns raised in the first two reference checks.

### Conduct & Service Check, as per the FRNSW Employment Screening Policy:

1. **Service Check** via FRNSW HR Advisory Team to review the following service information:
    - Sick leave in last 12 months (days, occasions, and instances of unsupported leave)
    - Workers compensation outstanding claims
    - P-file notations re. unsatisfactory service within the last 12 months
  2. **Conduct Check** via Professional Standard Branch (PSB) to confirm if any adverse findings against the employee within the last 12 months (including any pending matters)
- Anything flagged in the conduct & service check as being detrimental to the employee - the hiring manager is to contact the Firefighter to ask for them to contextualise what was flagged and provide any further information to assist in the discretionary decision of the hiring manager.

### Medical Assessment:

Full pre-employment medical assessments are not required for existing Retained Firefighters unless certain criteria are met.

The candidate's medical file will be reviewed by the FRNSW Health & Medical Team to determine any current injury, illness or restrictions in place, and advise what assessment is required. If an assessment is required, the degree of medical assessment will be based on the individual's situation which may range from a full medical assessment to specific assessments based on the nature of the injury or illness.

If nothing is identified via the file review, the medical assessment will not be required.

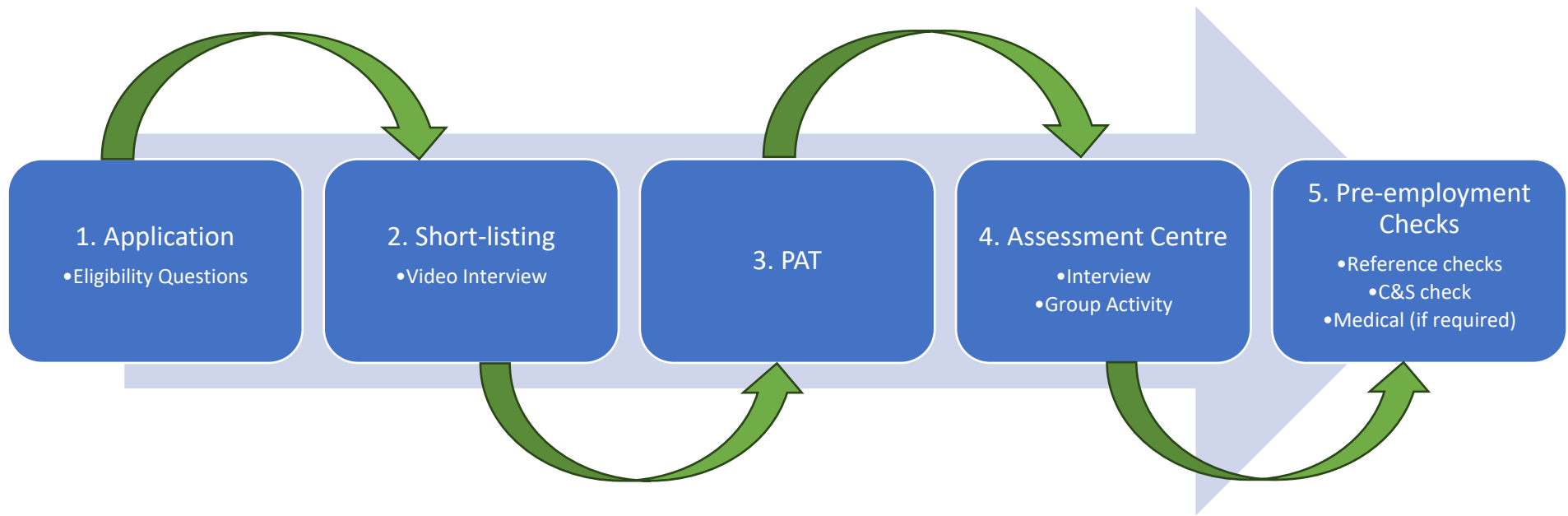


## Assessment Matrix

	Application	Screening	PAT	Assessment Centre		Pre-Employment Checks	
		Video Interview	Physical Aptitude Test	Interview	Group Activity	Reference Checks	Conduct & Service Check
<b>Eligibility</b>							
Min 4 years service	X						X
NSW Driver's Licence	X						
Demerit Points	X						
<b>Focus Capabilities</b>							
Act with integrity				X		X	
Communicate effectively		X			X	X	
Commit to customer service				X		X	
Demonstrate accountability				X		X	
<b>Job Specific Skills/Attributes</b>							
Problem solving					X	X	
Team work					X	X	
Resilience / stress management				X		X	
Alignment to values		X		X		X	
Physical fitness/strength			X				
<b>Conduct</b>							
Conduct, service, PSB records							X



## End to End Assessment Process



Each stage is progressive, meaning candidates will need to meet the requirements of each stage to progress to the next stage.



## Scoring Methodology

Method	Assessing	Scoring Methodology
Application	Eligibility	Meets / does not meet
Video Interview	Behavioural capabilities / attributes*	Likert scale (1 - 5): pass mark of 3 (acceptable) on each capability assessed
Physical Aptitude Test	Physical fitness / strength	Meets / does not meet
Assessment Centre	Behavioural capabilities / attributes*	Likert scale (1 - 5): pass mark of 3 (acceptable) on each capability assessed
Pre-employment Checks	Confirming conduct, service, performance, medical record	Meets / does not meet

\*Assessment of behavioural capabilities (assessed via the Video Interview and Assessment Centre) will utilise a 5-point Likert rating scale to reflect the level of capability demonstrated:

<b>5 – Very strong</b>	The candidate provided an excellent response demonstrating above level capability.
<b>4 – Strong</b>	The candidate provided a thorough response which demonstrated solid capability at the required level.
<b>3 – Acceptable</b>	The candidate provided a satisfactory response which met the standard required.
<b>2 – Limited</b>	The candidate provided limited evidence of the required level of capability and would require development.
<b>1 – Poor</b>	The candidate did not demonstrate competence at the required level or demonstrated negative behaviours. The candidate would require significant development.

Determination of scores is based on pre-defined behavioural indicators according to the required level, taken from the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework and the Retained Firefighter role description / role analysis.





## Ranking

Up to 25% of Permanent Firefighter vacancies can be allocated to successful Retained Firefighters via the Pathways Recruitment. Prior to each Recruitment round, FRNSW must notify the Retained workforce of the number of positions which will be available in that recruitment round.

For the FY24/25, Recruit Classes will cater to a maximum of 240 Recruits, meaning up to 60 Retained Firefighters can be selected in the 2024 Pathways recruitment campaign. The precise number to be set aside for the Retained to Permanent Pathway will be notified in line with the Award requirements.

To be deemed successful, candidates must:

- Meet all eligibility requirements
- Achieve scores of at least 3 (acceptable) on all behavioural capabilities assessed in the Video Interview and Assessment Centre (panel interview and group task)
- Meet requirements at the PAT (pass/fail)
- Pass all pre-employment checks

Assuming the number selected is 25%, should more than 60 candidates meet the above criteria, totalled scores from the video interview, interview and group task will be ranked, and the top 60 candidates will be deemed successful.

Should multiple candidates who have met requirements achieve the same score at the 60<sup>th</sup> rank, those candidates will be considered successful and will progress.



## Unsuccessful Candidates

Candidates deemed unsuccessful can elect to transfer their application into the same general intake round of the external Permanent Firefighter recruitment campaign, to be considered alongside external candidates. These Retained Firefighters will be required to complete and pass the initial online testing stage of the general campaign but will not be required to re-sit any assessments they met requirements on during the Retained to Permanent Pathway recruitment process (i.e. satisfactory results from the video interview, PAT and/or Assessment Centre remain valid and can be carried over).

## Questions

Should any candidates or prospective candidates have questions about their individual circumstances or with any of the contents of this Strategy, please get in touch with FRNSW at [SustainableOncallFirefighterProgram@ifre.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SustainableOncallFirefighterProgram@ifre.nsw.gov.au) or with the FBEU at [garnott@fbeu.net](mailto:garnott@fbeu.net), and your question will either be answered or directed to the best person to answer your question.